第14話　星下で

CHAPTER 14: UNDER THE STARS

AH!
HEY, CELICE!
EH? AGAIN?
I WAS THINKING WE SHOULD GO TOGETHER, SO I WENT LOOKING FOR HIM...
YOU'RE LATE! WE WERE WAITING FOR YOU!
SORRY ABOUT THAT, TIME FLEW WHILE WE WERE TALKING. NOW, ABOUT THE MEETING...
WELL, YOU SEE... WE CAN'T FIND ALESS. AGAIN.

AH...
THEN LORD CELICE, I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE...
AH, OKAY...
...
...
AH, I SEE...

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DID ANYTHING HAPPEN BETWEEN YOU AND JULIA, CELICE...?
...? "SOMETHING?" NO, NOTHING...
THE WAY YOU WERE LOOKING AT JULIA WAS SUSPICIOUS!
TELL ME! TELL ME, CELICE!
WAIT, WHAT?!
I PROMISED TO GO SHOPPING WITH HER...
JUST THAT ...?
WHAT ELSE?
LIES!
YES, JUST THAT. THE REST WAS NORMAL BANTER.
AH, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE NEED TO LOOK FOR ALESS...
OH, IT'S FINE. WE DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HIM.

LE...
IS HE PLAYING LONE WOLF OR SOMETHING?
CUT THAT ALREADY, DAMMIT...
ONCE YOU LOOK FOR HIM, HE'S ALREADY LEFT!
IF YOU TRY TALKING TO HIM, HE BECOMES ALL GLOOMY!
I WAS JUST TALKING NORMALLY TO JULIA...
E-EITHER WAY, LEAF...
NOTHING HAPPENED AT ALL.
REALLY.

REALLY?
UH? WHA... UWAH! ALESS?!
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE A GREETING?
BORING! I THINK IT'D BE NICE IF YOU HAD ONE OR TWO HOT STORIES TO SHARE...
CELICE, DELMUD AND THE OTHERS HAVE RETURNED. LET'S GO BACK TO THE TENT.
DELMUD AND THE OTHERS? I'M GLAD... ARE THEY HURT?
WHO KNOWS, I'VE ONLY SEEN THEM.
YOU'LL UNDER-STAND ONCE YOU GO.
OKAY.
UWAH, HE'S GLARING AT ME...

ARGH!
IT HURTS!
IT HURTS, IT HURTS!
HERE, LAKCHE... STAY STILL!
YES. SORRY FOR WORRYING YOU.
I'M GLAD YOU'VE RETURNED SAFELY. ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
SHUT UP SKASAHER!
A CERTAIN CLUMSY SOMEONE TRIPPED AND CUT HER LEG, BUT THE REST OF US ARE PRETTY MUCH FINE...
IT'S GOOD THAT IT WASN'T ANYTHING SERIOUS! I'M GLAD YOUR WOUNDS ARE JUST LIKE THIS!
SORRY RANA, YOU CAME RUNNING HERE AND YET IT WASN'T ANYTHING SERIOUS...

I'M NOT SEEING HER...
BY THE WAY, WHAT ABOUT FEE?

WE SHOULDN'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HER.
LORD CELICE, IT SEEMS THEY'VE JUST MISSED EACH OTHER.
FEE? SHE WAS SCOUTING, TOO?

AH. YES.
SKASAHER, REPORT THE SCOUTING RESULTS.
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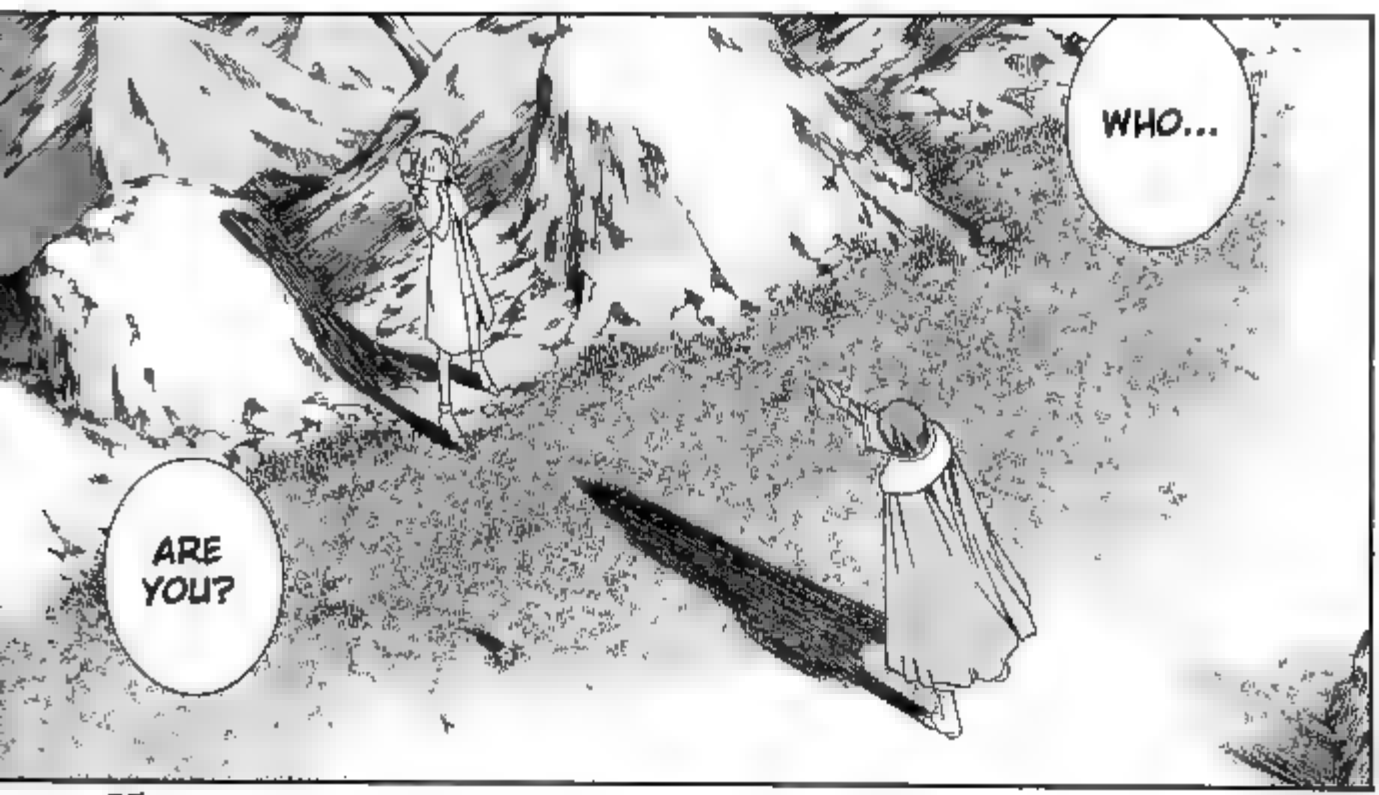
HOW-EVER...
AND WE COULDN'T SEE ANY OF THEM IN MANSTER.
IT'S THOUGHT THE IMPERIALS FLED ONCE ALSTER FELL,

WHEN WE WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE THAT PLACE...
WE NOTICED SOME BLACK FIGURES FLYING OVER MANSTER, WHICH WERE BLOWN AWAY BY A STRONG, HURRICANE-LIKE WIND.
WIND?
WHAT ABOUT THAT? DOESN'T SOUND ODD AT ALL.
I DON'T THINK IT WAS A NATURAL WIND.
IT WAS CLEAR THE WIND WAS SWIRLING WITH THE BLACK FIGURES AT ITS CENTER.
SO, WE THOUGHT IT'S PROBABLY MAGIC CAST BY SOMEONE, ON PURPOSE.
THOSE BLACK FIGURES ARE...
PROBABLY THRACIAN SOLDIERS, I SUPPOSE.

DIDN'T THEY SAY THEY WERE FLYING?
OH? DID YOU FORGET, SHANAN? THRACIAN SOLDIERS ARE...
STRONG...
WIND MAGIC...
HUH.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHAT IT MIGHT BE, LEVIN?
WELL...

I WONDER WHY...


WHO...
ARE YOU?

I AM SETY.
I AM A TRAVELER WHO HAPPENS TO BE IN MANSTER.

.. WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
... OF COURSE,
JUST TELLING YOU MY NAME WON'T MAKE YOU LOWER YOUR GUARD.
EXCUSE ME, BUT HEALING YOUR CUT COMES FIRST.
EH?
?
NO!

YOU WANTED TO ASK ME ABOUT THAT, CORRECT?

EVEN BE-FORE...
THEN THAT'S ...
I AM OPPOSING THEM, BUT I DIDN'T DO THIS.
TRULY,

LIKE HYENAS WAITING FOR THEIR CHANCE...
IT SEEMS THOSE THRACIAN SOLDIERS WOULD COME HERE AS ENVOYS TO [illegible] THE SITUATION
EVEN BACK WHEN MANSTER WAS UNDER THE EMPIRE'S RULE,
THIS ONE WAS PROBABLY TAKEN DOWN BY IMPERIALS AROUND THAT TIME
SO YOU AREN'T AFRAID OF ME ANYMORE?
SINCE THEY KNEW THRACIA LACKED THE POWER TO STAND AGAINST THEM.
THE EMPIRE DON'T REALLY BOTHER ABOUT THIS
WHAT ABOUT YOUR [illegible] SITUATION?

NO, I'M NOT.
BECAUSE HIS EYES WERE GENTLE
JUST LIKE BROTHER'S WHEN HE WAS SOOTHING ME
I CAN TRUST HIM.
I SEE.
YOU'RE ASKING WHY I'M OPPOSING THRACIA, HUH...
EVERYTHING STARTED WHEN I LEFT ON A JOURNEY TO LOOK FOR SOMEONE.

DURING MY TRAVELS, I CAME TO KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD'S CURRENT STATE.
AS I GOT CLOSER TO THE EMPIRE, THE OPPRESSIVE DISORDER GOT WORSE AND WORSE.
I HEARD THE EMPIRE WAS HOLDING CHILD HUNTS.
AND WHILE I HAD NO CONFIRMATION,
HUNTS...
CHILD...
WHETHER THAT WAS TRUE OR NOT, I FIGURED IT WASN'T THE TIME FOR ME TO BE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE.
I HAD TO DO SOMETHING... EVEN IF IMPERFECT, I HAD POWER.
AND I WAS IN MANSTER WHEN I MADE THAT RESOLVE.
UNACCEPTABLE, DON'T YOU THINK?

I WANTED
WHEN I CAME HERE,

WHY DON'T YOU FIGHT WITH US FROM NOW ON?
I'M PART OF THE LIBERATION ARMY AS WELL. I'M WEAK, BUT I'M LENDING THEM MY STRENGTH ANYWAY.
THEN WE JOIN OUR FORCES TO BATTLE THRACIA... AND THE EMPIRE.
THE LIBERATION ARMY IS GOING TO BE HERE SOON.
I'M TINNY!
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
SO IT'S REALLY THE LIBERATION ARMY... SINCE THE IMPERIAL ARMY HAS RETREATED, I HAD A HUNCH...
I'LL REMEMBER THAT.
TINNY... HUH.

SHE'LL PROBABLY FIND YOU RIGHT AWAY.
IT'S FINE IF SHE'S COMING THIS WAY.
EH?
THEN I PRESUME THAT PEGASUS KNIGHT MUST BE YOUR COMRADE...
... ALL RIGHT. TAKE CARE.
TINNY, I MUST GO. I NEED TO RETURN TO TOWN AND CHECK ON IT.

WE SHALL MEET AGAIN.
TINNY.
MISTER SETY!
YES.

YOU'RE TINNY, RIGHT?
PANT
I WONDER IF THE OTHER SCOUTS HAVE ALREADY HEADED BACK...
IN THE END, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I COULD FIND...
I LOVE MY LORD BROTHER.
YAAAAY
AREN'T YOU GLAD ARTHUR...?
I-I SEE. SO, LET'S HEAD BACK.
BY THE WAY, ARTHUR WAS DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR YOU
LORD BROTHER WAS...
NO WAY...
HE WAS EVEN CRYING, THINKING YOU HATED HIM.
BY THE WAY...
YES?

WHAT WERE YOU DOING THERE?
I WAS LOOKING AT THE LAND OF ALSTER...
AH... BUT DON'T TELL LORD BROTHER ABOUT THIS.
?
WELL, SURE.
ALSO, I WAS TALKING TO A WONDERFUL PERSON... MISTER SETY, WHO IS OPPOSING THRACIA ALL BY HIMSELF.
EH? YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, ALL ALONE?
HE SURE IS BRAVE, THIS SETY... DUDE...
...
SE... SETY?!
ER... MISS FEE?

WE'VE GRASPED THE ESSENTIALS.
TAKE A REST TO PREPARE FOR TOMORROW'S SORTIE. THAT'S ALL.
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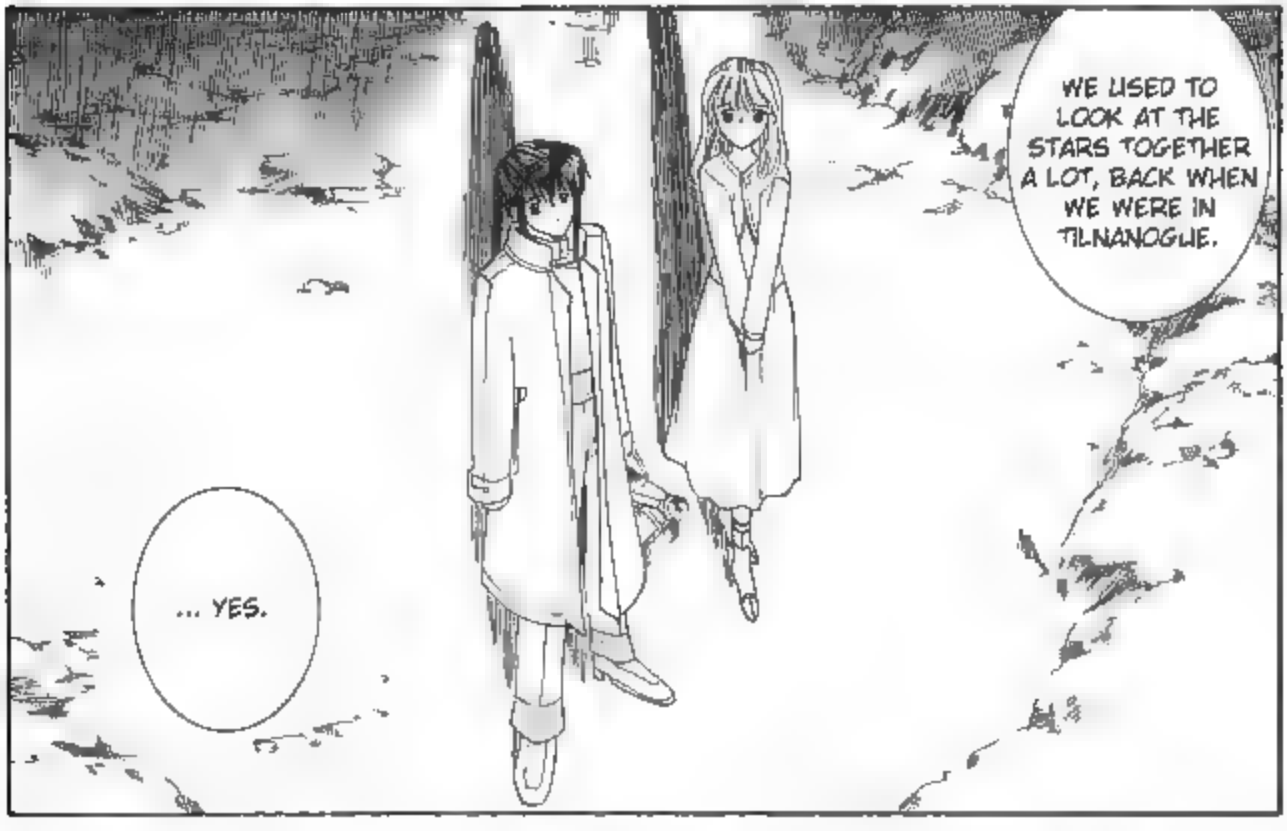
DON'T FOLLOW ME!
HEY ALESS DON'T LEAVE YET AT LAST WE CAN TALK AND...
RANA.
PHEW
YES, I'M ALL FINE NOW. THANKS, RANA.
CAN YOU STAND, LAKCHE?
IS THAT SO? I'M GLAD!

I'LL CARRY IT.
AH!
LORD CELICE, THAT'S A LITTLE TOO HEAVY...
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY.
YOU'VE BEEN TENDING TO SOLDIERS' WOUNDS HERE ALL DAY, RANA.
I'LL GO WITH YOU TO YOUR TENT. YOU SHOULD REST FOR A BIT.
YOU MUST BE TIRED, NO?

...
WE CAN SEE THE STARS CLEARLY ...
AREN'T THEY PRETTY, RANA?
... YES.


WE USED TO LOOK AT THE STARS TOGETHER A LOT, BACK WHEN WE WERE IN TIL NANOGUE.
... YES.

WE'RE FAR FROM OUR HOMETOWN, BUT...
THE STARS HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL... THEY'RE SO PRETTY...

RANA?

RANA!
WHAT'S WRONG?
ARE YOU HURT?
..AH.
I'M SORRY, LORD CELICE ...
I WAS JUST DISTRACTED...
LORD CELICE, THIS IS ENOUGH...
WHY? I'LL TAKE YOU TO YOUR TENT.
LORD CELICE, IF YOU DON'T GO SLEEP SOON YOU'LL BE IN TROUBLE TOMORROW.
BUT RANA..
THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN.

RANA!
AH!!
RANA ...
I'M REALLY ALRIGHT...

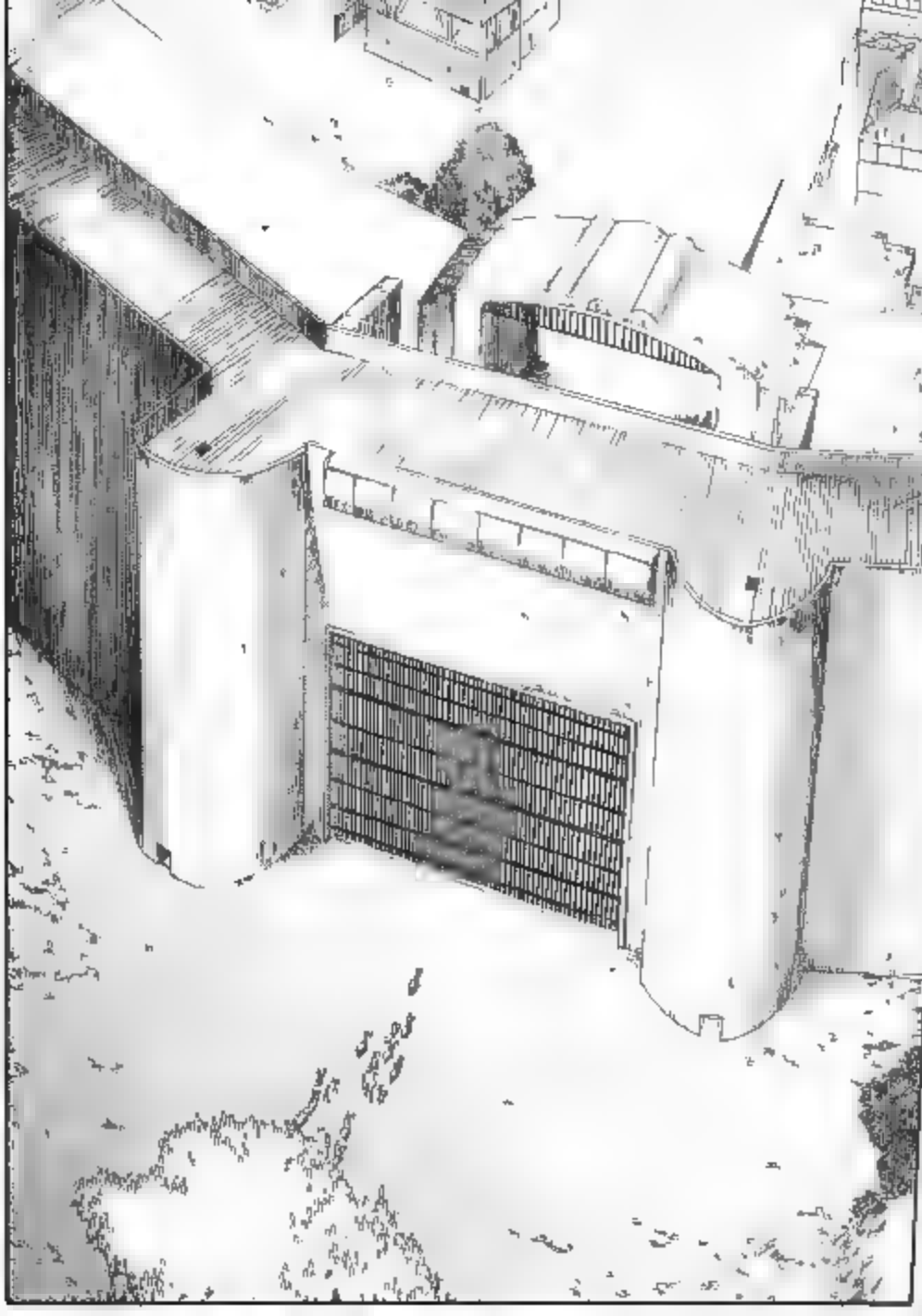
THAT WAS CLOSE, YOU KNOW!
WHY ARE YOU WALKIN' LIKE THAT, RANA?
THANKS...
I-I'M SORRY, FAVAL...
-IT'S FINE FAVAL, I'LL GO BACK ON MY OWN...
NO, IT'S FINE!
YOU GOIN' BACK TO YOUR TENT? I'LL TAKE YOU THERE.
HM?
I'M LOOKIN' FOR ALESS, NOBODY WANTS TO SLEEP NEAR HIS TENT.
WHY ARE YOU HERE...?
DAMN! HE REALLY WANDERS AROUND!
YO, EARL CELICE!

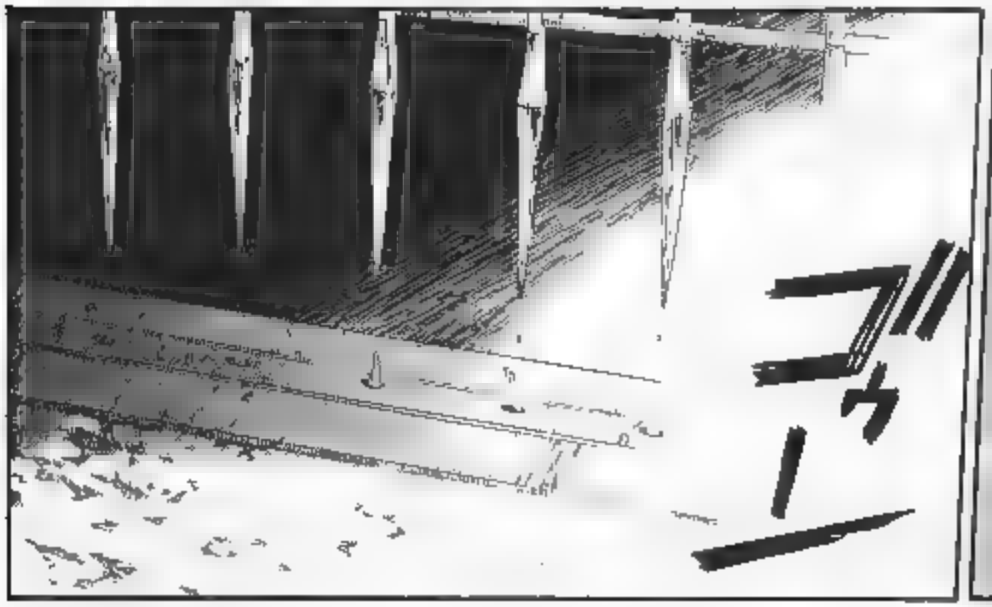
HI .. FAVAL.
...
OY, WAIT RANA!
AH, WHERE IS SHE?!
WHERE?
I WAS ESCORTING RANA.
WHAT WERE YOU DOIN'?
WHAT? THEN I'LL GO A...
GOOD NIGHT, LORD CELICE, FAVAL!
I'M REALLY ALRIGHT ALONE.

YES, RANA.
ISN'T SHE A GOOD GIRL?
I HEARD FROM LESTER...
YOU'RE RANA'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND, RIGHT?
HOW DID SHE USE TO BE?
WHEN I NOTICED, SHE WAS ALWAYS WORRYING ABOUT SOMEONE...
ALWAYS GENTLE TO EVERYONE...
HEH.
I CAN SEE THAT. I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
SHE WAS KIND OF A MOTHERLIKE GIRL...
... SHE WAS A GOOD GIRL.

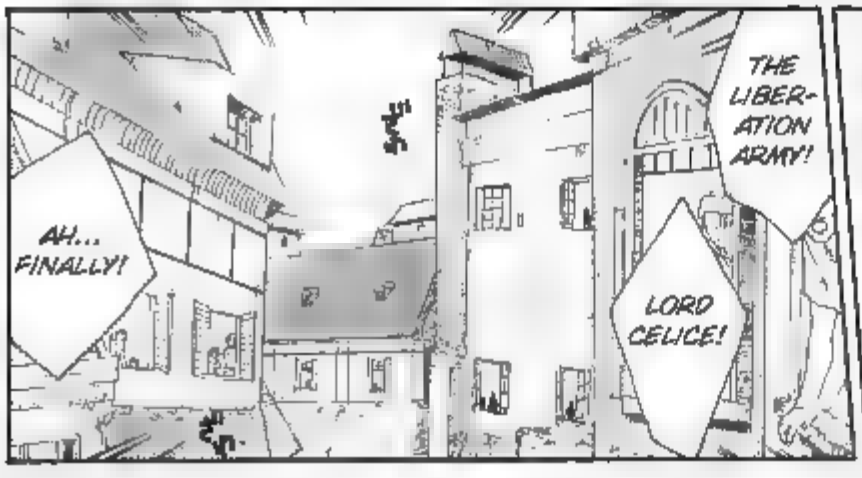
I REALLY LIKE HER.

SORRY, NOT YET!
HEY FAVAL, DID YOU FIND HIM?
SO, GOTTA RESUME MY SEARCH FOR ALESS. LATER, EARL!





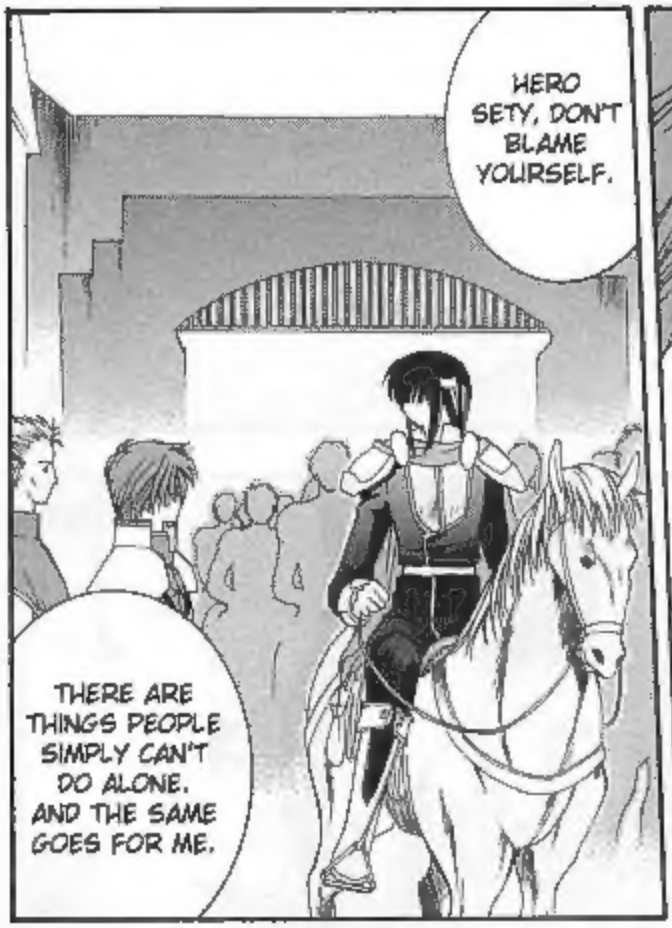
THIS IS MANSTER.


AH... FINALLY!
LORD CELICE!
THE LIBER-ATION ARMY!

HEY, IT'S THE LIBER-ATION ARMY!
IT'S THE LIBER-ATION ARMY ...

IS IT JUST ME, OR ARE THERE TOO FEW PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN?
YEAH.
THE LIBER-ATION ARMY!
SHH
SHH
SHH
IT'S THE LIBER-ATION ARMY!
WHILE SOME HAVE SADLY PASSED AWAY,
MOST PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN REFUGE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.
LORD CELICE, WE HAD BEEN WAITING...
FOR THIS TIME, ANXIOUSLY.
FORGIVE US FOR OUR LATE ARRIVAL.
WE'LL DO OUR BEST TO ANSWER TO THE PEOPLE'S EXPEC-TATIONS.
... ARE YOU MANSTER'S REPRESENT-ATIVE?

... NO.
HE'S A HERO WHO HAS PROTECTED US COUNTLESS TIMES WITH HIS POWER.
YES, HE IS SETY.


HERO SETY, DON'T BLAME YOURSELF.
THERE ARE THINGS PEOPLE SIMPLY CAN'T DO ALONE. AND THE SAME GOES FOR ME.

I AM NO HERO.
THERE WERE ALSO TIMES WHEN I MADE THE CIVILIANS INSECURE BECAUSE OF MY HALF-BAKED POWER.
THERE WERE ALSO CASUALTIES I COULD NOT PREVENT.

I'M HERE THANKS TO THE STRENGTH OF THOSE AROUND ME.

AND FROM NOW ON, YOURS AS WELL...

HERO SETY, I WANT YOUR BRAVERY.
PLEASE, LEND YOUR STRENGTH TO ME.
I SHALL ACCOMPANY YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.
... YES, LORD CELICE.
CHEERING

S-SO IT REALLY WAS BIG BROTHER SETY...
SO HE REALLY WAS DOING ALL THAT AROUND HERE?!